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Bedford and Burleson report hike in sales taxes

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Bedford sales tax revenue soared toward the end of 2014, a situation officials attribute to tax incentives and other encouragement offered to businesses during North Tarrant Express construction.

Reports from the state comptroller's office show a 53.9 percent increase in October 2014 over October 2013, and a 44 percent increase in November 2014 over November 2013.

Spokeswoman Natalie Foster said that in 2009, before construction began on the massive highway project, Bedford advocated on behalf of the businesses with NTE officials.

The North Tarrant Express was a \$2.5 billion makeover of Loop 820 and Texas 121/183.

When the construction was finished in Bedford's main business corridor, sales increased in both manufacturing and food service, Foster said.

One of the businesses seeing rapid growth is Adam Smith's Harley-Davidson dealership. Smith said he bought 7 acres just east of his current store at 1839 Airport Freeway and is building a larger, two-story outlet that he is calling the "Jerry World" of Harley dealerships.

Bedford Mayor Jim Griffin said he is excited to see the increase "and very proud of our council and staff for the tremendous work they have done to create a business-friendly environment and approach to growing the city's sales tax revenue."

Burleson, which straddles Tarrant and Johnson counties, also had a healthy gain — 34.9 percent more in October 2014 than October 2013.

"We were not expecting this much of an increase," City Manager Dale Cheatham said.

Cheatham said that Burleson doesn't have specific plans for the extra money but that half will go to the city's general fund and the rest to economic development and park projects.

"We continue to experience significant economic growth as a variety of businesses recognize the financial benefits of locating in Burleson," Cheatham said.

Other Northeast Tarrant cities also had gains, including Grapevine, 16.1 percent; Euless, 15.5 percent; Southlake, 14.9 percent; and North Richland Hills, 12.8 percent.

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